



Regional Service Council Minutes Region # 9

Meeting Date: 2/28/07
Meeting Location: Hendricks County Dept. of Child Services
6781 E US Hwy. 36, Avon, IN 46123

Council Members Present:

Sally Berish, For Judge David, and Kandi Killan, Barbara South, Steve Vaughn, Sally Wheat, Tim Miller, Harmony Gist, Char Burkett-Sims,

Guests Present:

Kamilla Aeschliman – Boone County Director, Andrea Goodwin – Hendricks County Director, Pam Turner - Putnam County Youth Development and Community Youth Services Bureau, Patti Harmless- Putnam County Youth Development and Community Youth Services Bureau, Linda Merkel - Putnam County Youth Development and Community Youth Services Bureau, Michael Scime - Montgomery County Youth Services Bureau, Norma Stewart -White's Residential and Family, Lisa Plewa-Children's Bureau Community and Community Partners for Child Safety, Mark Fairchild - Children's Bureau Community and Community Partners for Child Safety, Lisa Peck- Children's Bureau

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| Meeting Minutes |
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Meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM

Vacancy for Regional Services Council:

- Sally Wheat is retiring March 30th, leaving a vacant seat on the Regional Services Council.
- One individual was nominated by a local director. This opportunity will be presented to this individual before the decision is final.

Quality Services Review (QSR):

- Region 9 is serving as a pilot region for this project - the focus is to pilot the tools and utilize the information to identify what is working well and what is not working well, and what we can do to improve.
- The review will take place 3/12 through 3/16.
- An exit conference will be held at 10:00 AM at the Hendricks County Government Center in Danville. This meeting is open to stakeholders and other interested parties.

Child and Family Services Review

- 2 Focus Groups were conducted in January as part of the Federal Review to gather information regarding services in Region 8 and 9.
These focus groups have consisted of:
 - **Family Focus Group** - consisted of families from region who have been involved in the Child Welfare system. This was conducted by an outside facilitator. The families felt they could have a more freedom to speak without the presence of DCS staff.
 - **Core Group** - included representatives from service providers, professionals and staff in the communities within the regions.

- In general, the results indicated that the responsiveness of the DCS depends on the independent workers. Some are knowledgeable, resourceful and responsive; some are not. Feedback was offered regarding Child and Family Team Meetings and the effectiveness of these meetings. Overall they are viewed as positive.
- Other concerns and issues consistent among the groups include:
 - Overall DCS is seen as communicating more but quality of the information may be lacking.
 - There is a lack of Medicaid providers in the community and there is concern that this will negatively impact children and their families.
 - Parents feel that FCMS need to be less judgmental
 - Parents find it hard to take instruction or direction from someone who they feel has not had sufficient life experiences to be understand.
 - There is some concern about the loss of public assistance when child is removed from the home. At times this makes it difficult for the family to accomplish tasks necessary for the return of the children.
 - Parents felt that Informal Adjustments are not appropriate for drug involved parents. Indicating that these parents need to go in front of the Judge.
 - Kinship Caregivers feel they aren't given enough support, they may be an expert regarding the family dynamics but not services and DCS guidelines.
 - Families indicate that they are receiving their notices of hearings timely

➤ **Staff Retention:**

One of the issues believed to contribute to agency issues is staff retention. Region 9 has lost a number of new staff within the last year. A suggestion was made by one of the guests to look at the benefits of flexible schedules as a means to retain staff.

Community Partners for Child Safety:

- Mark Fairchild, the newly hired Program Director, made the report that the Program is now exploring the possibility of referrals outside of DCS.
- 9 families are engaged in the program at this time, 4 have declined.
- They are in the process of hiring 2-3 liaisons to help process referrals throughout the Region.
- Mark's e-mail address is m.fairchild@childrensbureau

Other Information:

- Lisa Peck of the Children's Bureau asked for input from the directors regarding Kinship Training.
- Foster Parent, Adoptive Parent and Kinship Care Training includes information regarding on the development of Individual Education Plans.
- Other members shared that IEP information is available and offered to help locate resources.

Next Regional Services Council Meeting: 3-28 @ 9:00 AM @ Hendricks County DCS Conference Room.